

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, GE

SUBJECT: SECOND MEETING OF THE SED CENTRAL COMMITTEE: AXEN AND
HONECKER SPEECHES

1. SUMMARY: POLITBURO MEMBER HERMANN AXEN AND SED GENERAL
SECRETARY ERICH HONECKER REPORTED ON SIGNIFICANT, CURRENT EVENTS
TO THE SED CENTRAL COMMITTEE AT ITS SECOND MEETING, SEPTEMBER
1-3, 1976. BOTH SPEECHES REITERATED STANDARD GDR IDEOLOGICAL
AND FOREIGN POLICY THEMES AND REPRESENTED NO NEW DEPARTURES
FROM THE LINES SET DOWN AT THE NINTH PARTEITAG IN MAY THIS
YEAR. THEY CONTINUED THE GDR'S TWO-PRONGED APPROACH IN DEALING
WITH THE FRG OF COMBINING STRONG WORDS IN DEFENSE OF GDR

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SOVEREIGNTY WHILE CALLING FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS IN GDR-FRG

RELATIONS. IN WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN AN UNINTENTIONAL SLIP, EAST GERMAN TV COVERAGE SET. 3 OF THE HONECKER ADDRESS CONTAINED SOME HARD LINE LANGUAGE ABOUT RELATIONS WITH THE FRG WHICH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DELETED FROM THE PRINTED VERSION OF THE HONECKER SPEECH APPEARING IN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND THE FOLLOWING DAY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE REPORT BY HERMANN ACEN COVERED A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS AND WAS CARRIED IN THE SEPT. 4 NEUES DEUTSCHLAND. THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTION, WHICH COVERS ABOUT A HALF-PAGE IN THE NEWSPAPER, IS OF INTEREST BECAUSE OF AXEN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE POLITBURRP AND HIS CHAIRMAN-SHIP OF THE VOLKSKAMMER FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. AXEN DEVOTED A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THIS SECTION TO AN APPRECIATION OF THE RECENT EUROPEAN COMMUNIT PARTY COFFERENCE. NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, HE PRAISES THE CONTINUED "LEADING ROLE" OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AND POINTS OUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE STRUGGLE FOR DETENTE AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE LOT OF THE WORKING CLASSES. HE CAME DOWN HARD ON "ANTI-COMMUNIST AND ANT-SOVIET" FORCES WHICH ARE TRYING TO DELAY PROGRESS TOWARD DETENTE. AXEN PROVIDED THE FIGURES OF 53.5 MILLION VISITORS WHO HAVE USED THE TRANSIT ROUTES IN THE GDR SINCE INCEPTION OF THE TRANSIT AGREEMENT WITH THE FRG ON JANUARY 1, 1972, AND THE STATEMENT THAT THE GDR HAS CONCLUDED 25 INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS WITH 15 CAPITALISTIC CONTRIES SINCE SIGNATURE OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT A YEAR AGO.

3. HONECKER'S REPORT AT THE SED CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM CONTINUED THE GDR'S TWO-PRONGED APPROACH IN DEALING WITH RELATIONS WITH THE FRG, BY MIXING STRONG WORDS IN DEFENSE OF GDR SOVEREIGNTY WITH CALLS FOR CONTINUED NORMALIZATION IN GDR-FRG RELATIONS. HONECKER NOTES THAT IN HIS MEETING WITH BREZHNEV IN CRIMEA, BOTH SIDES RESOLVED TO COUNTER ALL ATTEMPTS BY "CERTAIN CIRCLES", PARTICULARLY IN THE FRG, TO UNDERMINE GDR SOVEREIGNTY. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, HE UNDERSCORES THE GDR'S CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO DETENTE AND TO IMPROVED RELATIOSN BETWEEN THE FRG AND GDR, WHICH HONECKER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOTES IS IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH STATES. HONECKER STATES THA THE EXISTING TREATY SYSTEM PROVIDES A GOOD BASIS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS IN PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE, BUT POINTS TO A SERIES OF "PROVOCATIONS" FROM THE WEST INTENDED TO UNDERMINE THE QA AND OTHER TREATIES. HONECKER AGREES THAT SINCE THE GDR HAS ALWAYS SOUGHT TO REPEL ALL ATTEMPTS TO INJURE ITS SOVEREIGNTY, IT WOULD BE WRONG TO SPEAK OF "NEW CONCEPTUAL STANDARDS" IN GER POLICY.

4. IN WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN AN UNINTENTIONAL SLIP, THE HONECKER SPEECH APPEARED IN TWO DIFFERENT VERSIONS IN GDR MEDIA ON SEPT. 3 AND 4. THE TV COVERAGE ON THE EVENING OF SEPT. 3 CONTAINED SOME HARD-LINE LANGUAGE ABOUT RELATIONS WITH THE FRG WHICH WAS DELETED FROM THE PRINTED VERSION OF THE SPEECH IN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND THE NEXT DAY. THE DELETED PASSAGES HAVE TO DO WITH "HEIGHTENED IDEOLOGICAL TENSIONS" BETWEEN THE TWO GERMAN STATES, SPECIFICALLY THAT / A) THE GDR IS IN A BETTER BARGAINING POSITION OF THE TWO AND "OUR OPPONENT KNOWS THIS AS WELL"; B) THE INTENSIFIED IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE HAS ITS POSITIVE SIDE IN THAT IT DESTROYS THE ILLUSION THAT THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE ABOLISHED THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM; AND C) THE GDR IS BETTER AWARE OF THE SITUATION IN WEST GERMAN PARTY LEADERSHIP CIRCLES THAN THE REVERSE.

5. COMMENT: EXCEPT FOR THE HARD-LINE LANGUAGE SHOWN APPARENTLY UNINTENTIONALLY ON EAST GERMAN TV, BOTH HONECKER AND AXEN EVIDENCED A DESIRE TO MOVE AHEAD ON A VARIETY OF FRONTS WITH THE FRG BUT STOOD FIRM IN THEIR DEFENSE OF THE GDR BORDER. SUBSEQUENT INDICATIONS THAT THE GDR IS PREPARED TO PICK-UP THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE FRG OVER A NUMBER OF SMALLER SUBJECTS, E.G. EASING OF THE BORDER AREA VISITING REGIME, WHICH WERE BROKEN OFF IN JULY AS A RESULT OF BORDER INCIDENTS, SHOULD HAVE SOME IMPACT IN THE FRG. THIS GDR WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE MAY SOFTEN THE REACTION IN THE FRG TO THE GDR'S HANDLING OF RECENT BORDER VIOLATIONS AND THE GDR'S REFUSAL TO ALLOW TRANSIT OF THE STERNFAHRT BUSES. HONECKER'S CHIDING OF FRG REPRESENTATION HEAD GAUS AT THE LEOPZIG FAIR TO THE EFFECT THAT GAUS WOULD HAVE MORE TIME TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEGOTIATE IF HE WEREN'T SO ENGAGED IN MAKING PROTESTS, PUTS PERHAPS TOO LIGHT A COMPLEXION ON THE MATTER. IT IS PROBABLY INDICATIVE, HOWEVER, OF THE GDR'S DESIRE TO AVOID TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, ANY FURTHER CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE FRG AT THE PRESENT TIME. COOPER

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